

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's **OTHER** Newspaper

Last Chance

for



St Leonard's

When was the last time you had to go to hospital? If you are a healthy, or fortunate, person, you may have only been once in your life. If that is the case, then you had better be prepared for the changes that have taken place within the local health service within the last year or so.

For a person living in Hackney today it is not so easy to get surgery at any of the area's hospitals. For example, if you required treatment for a 'minor' complaint, then you would have to join the queue with over 5,000 other patients in the borough waiting for a hospital bed. Still, you probably wouldn't get an appointment to see a specialist for a year or so, anyway.

ATTACK

However, if you suddenly came on with a heart attack or were involved in a serious accident, you might be a bit more successful at securing a bed, although it could take the ambulance over an hour to find one for you; and if you were silly enough to do something nasty after 8 pm, then you might have to be ferried across London.

**THURSDAY
13
NOVEMBER**

Mass Lobby

Area Health Authority Meeting: Addison House, Chart Street, N.1. 2pm.

Coaches leave 34 Dalston Lane at 1.15pm.

Once you are actually found a hospital bed somewhere, you might be concerned that your friends and relatives won't be able to afford the bus fare to come and visit you (if they know where you are, that is); but don't worry, there'll be plenty of people sitting by your bed - waiting to fill it when you leave. And anyway, the health service is very keen now to send you home as soon as possible, whether you're fully cured or not. Then you'll have to join the queue in your GP's waiting room, along with all the other discharged patients.

In this age of high technology medicine you might find it hard to believe this bleak picture. But it is true. The Accident & Emergency Department at St. Leonard's, which

used to deal with over 30,000 cases a year, is now closed at night. In September the A&E Department at Barts. had to close down temporarily, with the result that for one Saturday night there were no emergency facilities in the whole of Hackney - and the Whittington Hospital in Islington had to deal with over 12 stretcher cases an hour.

Ambulance drivers are becoming more hard pressed to find beds and are forced to drive around - often in heavy traffic - with dying patients. And inside the hospitals acute wards are so overcrowded that sisters are having to make decisions over whose life is more important to save.

WORSE

And things will get worse. The City & East London Area Health Authority (AHA), has been making huge financial savings in the area, and on November 13 they will make their next cut by deciding whether to remove all acute surgical facilities from St. Leonard's Hospital.

Their objectives are to maintain a local health service within the tightening financial restraints imposed on them from above. They seem unconcerned that this service is already failing to meet the needs of the majority of people who use it. The only way that you can stop the rot is by publicly demonstrating your opposition to these measures.

The people of Holloway and Bethnal Green fought - and won - to stop the closure of their local hospitals; and, that is the only way St. Leonard's can be saved.

For details of who runs the Area Health Authority, see back page.



£2.5m cut in 10 mins

In just ten minutes at a Council Policy Committee meeting senior Councillors approved a report which cut nearly £2½ million from this year's budget. This is in addition to the cuts demanded by Environment Minister Michael Heseltine, the full impact of which has not yet been assessed.

The only discussion of this package of cuts took place at the Policy Committee meeting, when the only voice of protest came from the two members of staff who are allowed to attend the meeting, but have no voting rights. The Policy Committee consists of the Chairs of the various other committees and other stooges of the leadership. None of the left-wing back bench members of the Council are allowed to sit on the Committee.

There was also no discussion of the matter at the Labour Group meeting held just two days before. This would be normal procedure for such an important decision, but in this case the leadership again prevented other Councillors from speaking out.

Save

The cuts have not been referred to the relevant committees, either. This means that the Social Services Committee has, for instance, to save nearly £900,000 without being given a chance to discuss the matter first.

The full package of cuts is made up like this:

Accident Prevention	2,184
Administration	401,000
Finance	168,000
Health & Consumer Protection	61,012
Housing	326,000
Leisure Services	186,500
Planning & Highways	384,000
Social Services	899,700
Economic Development	14,700
Twinning	2,920
TOTAL	£2,446,016

When the package was introduced as part of the Policy Committee report at the Council meeting, left-wing Councillors supported a move by Anthony Kendall not to adopt the report - in effect to refer it back to the Committee for further discussion.

One member, Patrick Kodikara complained: "When before have we made a decision like this? We might as well let five or ten senior members of the Policy Committee make all the decisions, and let the rest of us go home."

This move was inevitably defeated. Leader Martin Ottolangui blamed the necessity for the package entirely on the higher inflation rate and minimum lending rate than had been budgeted for at the beginning of the year. This was no doubt true, but the manner in which the package was presented did nothing for any confidence in the way future cuts will be made. Where's the commitment to consulting the people that was in the Council's manifesto now?

INSIDE

NOVEMBER IN HACKNEY -
What's On Guide -
see pp 7 and 8.

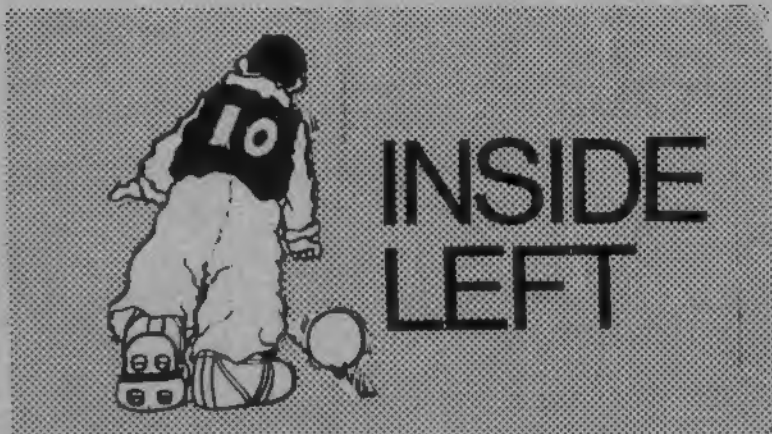
INSIDE LEFT - all the latest political news	p.2
THE REAL LABOUR PARTY STANDS UP	p.3
MATTHEW O'HARA - questions still unanswered	p.4
IMPROVING LONDON TRANSPORT - campaign restarts	p.5
PARAQUAT WEEDKILLER IN ABNEY PARK	p.8

Changing sides

I am getting a bit long in the tooth, or so my friends (I do have a few) keep telling me. That's why I remember a little incident some eight years ago, which I would like to tell you about. In 1972 there was, as now, a Tory government (boo! hiss!). This government was determined, as governments tend to be, to govern. Being a bunch of wicked Tories, they were of course only interested in perpetuating the interests of the boss class, etc., etc....

This did not go down too well with the leaders of the people in Hackney. Flushed with their success in wresting back control of the borough from the Tories (yes, there was a day when the Tories controlled the Town Hall. While 1968 is remembered in the rest of the world as the year when there was nearly revolution, in Hackney the Conservatives won control of the Council, for the first time since before the First World War. But I digress...)

The battlefield drawn up for the Tory government and the Labour Councils (for Hackney was not alone in its struggle) was a particularly mean piece of legislation called the Housing Finance Act. This was an attempt to force Councils to charge what were called "fair rents" for their housing. Rent scrutineers were to be appointed by central government and effectively it was to be they who would decide how much subsidy the



Council was allowed to give its tenants.

What happened in Hackney? There was, as there is today, a lot of puffing and blowing about the iniquities of the Tories and whether they should obey the law, however much they disagreed with it. All this is predictable, and happens every week under the present government. But would Hackney implement the Housing Finance Act, or succumb to some dangerous left-wing motion that it should unite with tenants' groups and refuse? Perhaps even give tacit support to a rent strike?

There followed the most extraordinary series of debates and divisions. The leadership was split on the issue. The timids and faint-hearts were for implementation. The rest were for standing and fighting. A look now at the way the division went

throws an interesting light on the current debate. Joining people like Tory Joe Lobenstein, then an alderman, were several people who are today associated with the leadership and the "right" (if one can simplify the labels in this way). Les Layward, Mick Andrews, Max Feldman, Florence Newill (later to be elected a tenants' representative on the Housing Management Committee, when she lost her seat), George Silver, Steve Scott, Don Waller and Fred Weeden. Voting against implementation were dangerous lefties like Gerry Ross, Jackie Warawi, Sam Springer and Jim Warner. And also Martin Ottolangui, Johnny Kotz, Charles Cable, Bob Masters, Eddie Millen, Bob and Matilda Owen, Arthur Taylor, Denis Trim, Don Ward, Ken Wilson and John Wobey.

All these people are still councillors and voted against implementing the Housing Finance Act. They voted to defy an iniquitous piece of Tory legislation which could have made them personally liable for paying the increased rent that the Tories wanted to extract from the tenants of Hackney. They could each have been made bankrupt, and perhaps gone to prison. But, of course, this did not happen because they were in the minority. The Right and the Tories combined to win the vote by 31 votes to 28. And Hackney submitted, as usual, and tenants were forced to pay a £1 per week rent rise.

The same happened up and down the country, with the exception of the small district council of Clay Cross, in Derbyshire. There the Council refused to implement the Act, and Councillors forced into personal bankruptcy, a sacrifice which echoed the decision of George Lansbury and the Poplar Council in the 1920s to go to jail rather than impose a full rate rise on the poorest borough in London.

Nearly all those Councillors who voted against implementing the Housing Finance Act in 1972 voted for implementing the Housing Act, forcing them to sell Council houses, in 1980. This includes the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chairs of the Housing Management, Planning and Finance Committees. Their excuse is now that they cannot defy the law of the land. It was possible in 1972. It is not possible now. What else has changed - apart from the colour of their skins?

LETTERS

Hackney's Road To...

The Communist Party in Hackney does not practise a "sort of schizophrenic Broad Left politics", as alleged by intrepid Inside Left.

The Communist Party is committed to working with all democratic and socialist minded people who are willing to struggle for social progress. This means that Communists, as a matter of course, find ourselves working together for many causes along with members of the Labour Party and other left groups, religious people and progressive people without any specific political allegiances. Communists try hard to conduct our political work in ways which are both principled and unifying. Perhaps this is why so many Communists are so regularly elected to positions of trust and responsibility within the trade union movement, community and campaigning organisations.

Following the adoption in 1977 of the Communist Party programme 'The British Road to Socialism', Hackney Communists have made even greater efforts to overcome sectarianism within our own ranks and to work more closely with others on the left. This period has coincided with a significant increase in our membership, an increase in the number of Communist Party candidates in elections and in votes received. Socialist and Marxist ideas now have a wider influence within the borough. Nevertheless, we recognise that we, and all on the left, have far to go before we reverse the drift to the right and begin to progress towards socialism.

The present electoral contest in Rectory ward is not a case of Communist practice contradicting our policy. The Rectory branch of the Communist Party is an active force in the area and has made a significant contribution over the years to many local campaigns, ranging from the organisation of private tenants to the development of an active branch of the Anti-Nazi League. We are the only organisation in the ward which has consistently

campaigned for socialist ideas.

Naturally, our work has influenced others active in the area. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for revitalisation and leftward move of Rectory ward Labour Party, which has the distinction of being the only ward in Hackney to organise public report backs from its councillors.

However, the Labour election address, a reasonable and progressive document, makes no mention of democracy, socialism or the struggle against racism - which most socialists believe to be crucial issues.

In the election the Communist Party is campaigning for specific democratic reforms - including "award council for people's control", for socialist ideas, against racism and for a real fight against the Tory cuts. Without the Communist Party contesting the election the first three issues above would not have been raised, let alone campaigned for. This alone justifies the Communist campaign. And our record in fighting the cuts is much better than that of the Labour Group or any of the Hackney Labour Parties.

Of course, the Communist Party has also considered the electoral situation. Rectory is one of the safest Labour wards in Hackney - were the Communist campaign to split the vote then the Communist candidate would be elected, with a "safe majority". How could we consider the politics of the candidate who, according to you, "is an unknown fish in the sea of Hackney politics"?

The Communist candidate, as you point out, has the support of many people who are not members of the Communist Party. But we are not, perhaps unfortunately, in an electoral alliance with any other group. As part of the struggle to advance left unity and socialist action in the borough the Communist Party is willing, at any time, to discuss electoral alliances and tactics, including with our comrades in the Labour Party.

Finally, I wish to argue that the Communist presentation of socialist ideas, the work of the Communist Party in practical struggle, our readiness to develop democratic alliances with progressive people and organisations makes, in the present situation, the Communist Party the natural party for all on the left to support in elections. I would welcome the opportunity to debate this view in your columns and at any meetings.

Best wishes,
Dave Green, Secretary,
Hackney Communist Party.

ARMAGH JOINS H-BLOCK

On Saturday 25th October demonstrators, including Hackney Trades Council representatives and local Troops Out campaigners marched through Hackney in support of the Hunger Strikers in Armagh and the Maze prisons.

The Hunger Strikers are demanding political status, which would allow them to wear their own clothes, exempt them from prison work and allow them to associate freely with other prisoners.

The prisoners in the H Blocks in the Maze have been protesting at the removal of

political status since 1976, when they started going "on the blanket", refusing to wear prison clothes. For the last two years they have also refused to slop out their cells, and have been smearing excreta over cell walls.

The women in the Armagh prison are defying IRA policy and have joined the men in their bravest attempt yet to force the British government to concede that there is a war going on in Northern Ireland, and that they are political prisoners.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

National demonstration against Unemployment

LIVERPOOL

SATURDAY 29th NOVEMBER

Train leaves Euston at 8.15 am. Returns 6 pm.

Tickets £9.00 from Hackney North and Stoke Newington Labour Party, 5 Stamford Hill, N.16.

Advertisement inserted by Hackney North and Stoke Newington Labour Party.

The real Labour Party stands up

The recent Labour Party conference and the current leadership election has focussed a lot of adverse media criticism on the Party. This has inevitably resulted in a series of personality-based articles and programmes which inevitably have not tried to find out what Party activists think. In a small effort to redress this balance, HPP recently spoke to Tony Milwood, who was the constituency delegate from Hackney North and Stoke Newington Labour Party to the conference.

HPP: why do you think that there has suddenly been so much change inside the Labour Party?

TM: I think that the reason is that people have begun to ask themselves why have Labour governments failed. This comes down to the fact that a Labour government is limited because it cannot control the main economic levers of power. People have come to realise that a Labour government which sees itself in purely parliamentary terms cannot have the political resources to supply an answer. In order to stand up to pressure there must be some sort of counterforce outside the Party. This is not only going to be provided by Trades Unions but also by people organised in other groups, not all in the Labour Party. By this I mean tenants' organisations, community groups and so on.

How has the Labour Party changed locally?

Well, I'll give you an example from my ward. In Northfields, in 1973, we used to have about three or four meetings per year. Between three and six people used to come to them, and most of these were the ward officers - who were also the councillors. Now we have 11 meetings a year, and about 15 or 20 people come. And, of course, the ward councillors are no longer officers of the party branch.

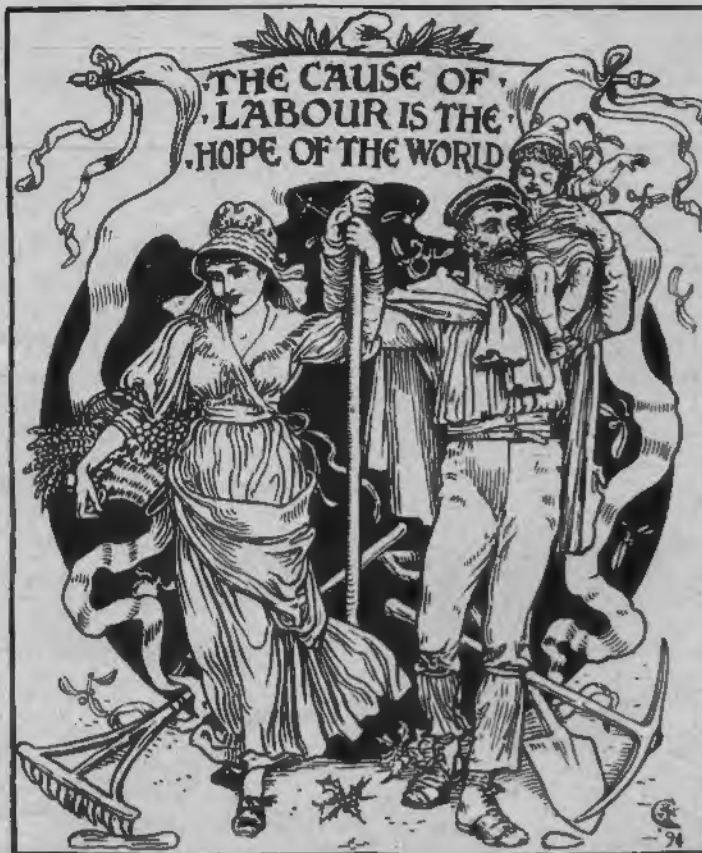
What kind of party does the Labour Party want to be now? The main mood of the conference was a sense of distance from the Parliamentary Party and what they had been doing. This was expressed directly by the Tribune Group of MPs, who came over as a most important force in the Party.

That's very interesting. The media has largely gone for the ultra-left takeover of the Party-we-know-and-love theory. You're saying that the constituency parties have, in fact, largely swung behind the type of politics represented by the Tribune Group, not the Trotskyists like Militant? Exactly. The mood was definitely Tribune left, not ultra-left. This is why there was such support for Tony Benn. And we don't want puppets in the Parliamentary Labour Party. We have not suggested that MPs become mandated. We want vigorous and creative people who will represent the desire for socialism which are the views of rank and file members of the Party.

This is why there was strong support for the reselection of MPs issue, presumably. Yes; the Party as a whole wants individuals who are out of touch with the policies of the party to be asked to stand down. And it's not such a wild and radical idea. After all, local councillors have to get reselected, and it happens to MPs in other countries. What it does attack is the corrupt Labour Parties and the politics of patronage, the distribution of favours.

Do you think that the defeat of the left on the manifesto issue was important? If we have a PLP and leadership that is at one with the movement as a whole, then I don't think this will matter. I can't see them adopting a manifesto that is at odds with the Party's views.

Do you think that the failure to settle the issue of the



electoral college is a defeat? Not too much given the narrowness of the majority. The important decision is that the principle of the electoral college has been agreed.

How about the power balance at conference? The Trades Unions' block vote and so on...

Well, I'd like to see CLPs get more influence inside the Party, certainly, but more importantly Trades Unionists must democratise the whole process of their intervention in the Labour Party. We want to continue the closest of links between the Labour party and the Trades Union movement - this is one of the great strengths of the British Labour Party compared with the European parties. But there are clear examples of undemocratic practices among some union delegations. The AUEW leadership, for instance, did not consult its elected delegation when it came to voting in the constitutional issues.

The Right Wing have clearly

suffered some defeats at conference. What has happened is that the Right want to see the conference defied, unlike the Left, which has always knuckled under and sought to win by argument and agitation. This is clear in the attitude of those supporting Denis Healey for the leadership, particularly those around the

"Gang of Three". Healey is more astute and hasn't directly defied conference decisions. He'd scupper his chances of winning the leadership if he did that.

Who will you - or Hackney North CLP - be supporting for the leadership?

The CLP has yet to meet to decide. But personally speaking, and given that Benn is not standing, I would say Michael Foot. I am glad that Foot has made it plain that he will seek endorsement from an electoral college. But I would think that Benn would get support from about 70 per cent of the CLPs.

Do you think that a Labour Party led by Benn would be able to change things in Britain?

I think that any Labour government led by Benn would have been seen to have won an enormous victory. But to get him elected to power would be a huge battle when you consider all the powers that would be stacked up against us. The banks, the oil companies and the millionaires that control the press...

And the Tory Party? ...and the Tory Party?

Liberal Spirit

Liberal Jeff Roberts's win in the Wenlock Ward by-election has a number of interesting side-effects. One of these is the gratifying nose-dive taken by the National Front candidate Derrick Day, whose lack of impact showed that there is some hope that the Front is a spent electoral force. Whether they are a spent force on the streets is however a different matter. There was the usual bunch of tough-looking kids at the nationally-organised Front march through Hoxton's virtually deserted Sunday streets, four days before the election.

The real disaster was the Labour poll, in a seat they should have won without trying. And there's the key to their failure. They didn't really try, at least compared with the energetic canvassing and case-work approach of Roberts. He has been cultivating Hoxton virtually single-handed for several years, just waiting for a snap by-election of this kind, and John Dowling's death was really a Godsend.

The Liberals' success in the Council elections in 1978 in Tower Hamlets, where totally unexpectedly they won seven seats, showed that moribund Labour Parties have a lot to fear from any candidate that can be nice to people and seem to offer solutions. Roberts stole the march on Labour by moving the writ that forced the election to be called, thus making it seem as though Labour was

dallying over calling the by-election, which they were. With the help of the Hackney Gazette, he was home and dry.

There is, however, another side to Jeffrey Roberts, and one he has been careful to say is now behind him. HPP readers with long memories may recall articles in 1977, which detailed a "right-wing takeover of local Liberals". Our information then, which came from a reliable source, indicated that his views on matters like immigration were somewhat to the right of most other members of his party.

Roberts also became associated with his electoral opponent Derrick Day in a strange committee called the Hoxton Improvement Committee, which seems to have disappeared now, although Day still cited it as an organisation he represented in the planning enquiry into the NF headquarters in December last year.

The result was that an independent Liberal was selected for the GLC elections that year, when Roberts was the Official Liberal candidate. Somewhat unusually, the independent had the backing of the regional Liberal Party. It was of no real matter, since both came disastrously bottom of the poll.

To be fair, which HPP can be sometimes, Roberts has since made his peace with the Party, both regionally and nationally. He has also said that his remarks about immigration were "foolish".

Hackney TENANT

The monthly newspaper of the
Federation of Hackney Tenants Associations
From newsagents everywhere... 10p

You can't 'live' in Hackney without it!

O'HARA DEBATE RAISES QUESTIONS



Friends of Matthew O'Hara, the diabetic who died after alleged ill-treatment and neglect in Pentonville Prison, are sponsoring a public debate on the Prison Medical Service and Home Office secrecy.

The Home Office continues to obstruct all efforts to find out exactly what happened in Pentonville. In reply to a request from Stanley Clinton Davis, MP, for medical reports, they refuse to add anything to their previous letters which hinted that Matthew was insane and claimed he had perversely concealed from the prison officers that he was diabetic.

Representatives of the Friends of Matthew O'Hara recently had a meeting with Stanley Clinton Davis, who is determined to press the issue with the Home Office. Matthew's friends and he are now drafting a detailed point-by-point letter to send to the Home Office, in an effort to get behind the smokescreen of official secrecy. If the Home Office refuse to answer the points adequately - which they may well do - this gives Clinton Davis the opportunity to raise the matter on the floor of the House of Commons, perhaps with an adjournment debate.

The allegation of insanity has been refuted by Matthew's own doctor who described him as "an unusual and somewhat eccentric personality, highly intelligent...very articulate...with strong views that might not be orthodox or correct, but were not irrational". Matthew knew a great deal about diabetes, and took such good care of himself that he was described by one of his closest friends as "one of

the healthiest people I know". He had no suicidal tendencies and so the Home Office argument is quite incredible.

Even if, for some mysterious reason, Matthew had concealed his diabetes, this would not explain why he was coughing blood when he left Pentonville or why he continued to have stomach problems and vomit mucus almost up to the time of his death two months later. The only credible explanation of these symptoms appears to be Matthew's. He said he received a blow in the stomach from prison officers when he was admitted to Pentonville.

CENTERPRISE LETTER

Centerprise, of which Matthew was a member for many years, wrote to the Home Secretary in August, but they have yet to receive a reply. Their letter pointed out:

"Mr O'Hara's friends are trying to find out the cause of a dramatic decline in health in a very short time, for the whole of which he was in custody." It described Home Office explanations so far as "resting on the assumption that the only behaviour that needs explaining is Mr O'Hara's"; an assumption that had led the Under Secretary of State, Lord Belstead, to "slur Mr O'Hara's credibility by referring to matters that should be irrelevant to the points at issue".

Centerprise pressed for full public disclosure of all relevant reports and an investigation using all possible sources of information including, for example,

fellow prisoners.

Matthew was sent to Pentonville on 12 March and spent the first night in the prison hospital where the prison doctors tried to uncover evidence of mental illness, but failed to diagnose the diabetes. He was sent back to the cells and appears to have received no medical attention until 16 March when he was suddenly sent to the Royal Northern Hospital in a critical condition, and taken into intensive care.

DOCTORS EVIDENCE

Matthew's GP, Dr Michael Smith's inquest evidence shows why the Home Office wants its reports kept secret:

"I have a report from the Royal Northern Hospital. They did say that he was said to have had haematemesis (vomiting of blood) on 14 March, that's two days before he was admitted..."

"He was diagnosed as diabetic ketoacidosis; he is described as pale, thin, wasted, lethargic, mentally slow and confused."

"Ketosis is the accumulation of poisons in the circulation through not being supplied with insulin...anyone who is suffering from ketosis will be mentally confused and obviously won't be as rational as he would normally be."

Since the inquest, Dr Smith has been sent the correspondence between Stanley Clinton Davis and the Home Office and his comment after careful consideration of this and other evidence was: "On the facts as given to me, I would find it difficult to believe that he was not neglected, even working on the charitable assumption that he successfully concealed the fact that he was a diabetic from all the medical authorities that he came into contact with."

Matthew was so ill, in fact, that he and his friends thought he was dying. The hospital report shows that he had been seriously ill in prison for at least two days. But the Home Office told Clinton Davis that when "Mr O'Hara complained that he felt ill and had vomited a copious amount of blood...he was sent immediately by ambulance to the Royal Northern Hospital." (Our emphasis.)

Two days in a cell, vomiting blood, getting gradually more and more confused as poisons built up in his body, unable to eat because of the vomiting and unable to get the medical assistance he desperately needed: Matthew must have gone through hell! By the time his friends saw him the membranes of his throat were so tender that he could only speak in a hoarse whisper, and he was so weak that he could not hold a pen to write.

The inquest evidence raises a number of questions that the Home Secretary should answer:

* How does he explain the conflict between the hospital report and Home Office's letters to Clinton Davis? Why is the actual text of the medical reports being suppressed?

* Why was Matthew left in a cell for two days without treatment? Was his condition reported to the prison medical officers? If not, has anything been done to ensure wardens report prisoners' illnesses promptly? If it was reported, why did Matthew not receive medical attention until 16 March?

* How does the Home Office explain the blood vomiting? Was Matthew examined for scars or bruises? Was any note made of the injuries on his ankles referred to at the inquest?

* Why did the prison fail in four or five days to diagnose diabetes when a simple test should have revealed the condition within 24 hours of Matthew's last insulin injection?

NOT UNIQUE

Matthew O'Hara's case is not, unfortunately, unique. A recent report on prison deaths from the National Council for Civil Liberties argues that overcrowding is making the prison environment "increasingly unhealthy and brutalising". Prison deaths average 57 a year, 20 of which are officially recorded either as unnatural or as suicides. Pentonville is one of five prisons with most deaths over the past 11 years. Last year four prisoners died there - and that does not include people like Matthew who were discharged and died outside. One prisoner hanged himself, another was asphyxiated (not a suicide) and two died of bronchopneumonia. Only one was over 45 years old. The average of "natural" deaths in prison fell from 49 in 1977 to 43 in 1979. In the community it is 70 for men and 79 for women, so 43 does not seem a very natural age at which to die! Matthew was 41.

The prison medical service is under the Prison Department and completely separate from the National Health Service. It is believed largely to consist of doctors from colonial service and ex-army doctors, but the names of doctors working in prison are kept a secret. One prison medical officer has described treatment and control as "merely two sides of the same coin". The prison doctors are, apparently, as much concerned to enforce prison discipline as to treat prisoners' illnesses. A prisoner describes them as "an extension of the Home Office...they deal only in numbers instead of people and the general trend of

their policies is towards controlling and discouragement of application for treatment rather than a policy of giving proper medical attention". (Doug Wakefield: "A Thousand Days Of Solitary", PROP, 1980).

PRISONERS TALE

A prisoner sent to Pentonville in 1974 was on a course of four tablets a day of a powerful tranquilliser that is used in the control of acute alcoholic withdrawal symptoms. It was reported in the Guardian that when he entered the prison, his tablets were taken away from him and that during the first 24 hours he was only allowed half the prescribed dose. The next day he felt very ill, but was refused any of the tablets. He was told he was "making a fuss", and was given soluble aspirin instead! He became so desperate that he attempted suicide by jumping 40 feet from a gallery. He broke his pelvis and seven ribs and was sent to the Royal Northern Hospital. (Cohen and Taylor: "Prison Secrets", NCCL/RAP).

Like other prisons, Pentonville has a Board of Visitors, which is supposed to hear prisoners' complaints and protect their rights. One of Matthew's friends wrote to a member of the Board asking if it would investigate the case. But the Board's chairman, Sir Harry Boyne, has written to the press denying there is any evidence for the allegations of Matthew and his friends, and describes a press headline on the case: "Pentonville Kills" as "scurrilous...blatant and calculated deceit (Islington Gutter Press, October). Sir Harry's letter seems to confirm recent accusations by Pentonville visitor, Margaret Watson, that the Board of Visitors is "an insignificant Home Office cypher entirely in the pockets of the Home Office", for it only repeats the Home Office case in a more immoderate tone.

Matthew's friends will continue to press for a full investigation. In the meantime they are holding a public meeting at Centerprise on Thursday 27 Nov at 8 pm with speakers from PROP (Geoff Coggan), Radical Alternatives to Prison, and NCCL. The meeting will be about medical treatment and secrecy in our prisons generally as well as about Matthew's case. Speakers from the audience will be particularly welcome, especially those with experience of conditions in local prisons, or relatives of prisoners. It is with a contribution of £50 from the Blair Peach Memorial Fund that we are able to carry on with the campaign.

Friends of Matthew O'Hara can be contacted c/o 177 Glenarm Road, E5.

L.T.: STAYING ALIVE?



Without the bus, life for many people would be far more difficult. For pensioners, the less well-off who don't own cars and for people living in districts without good alternative public transport systems, such as Hackney, getting to and from work would be much more difficult. Yet the end of the bus for thousands is at hand.

The Transport Bill of 1980 represents a major attack on public transport and opening the doors to all sorts of dangers and abuses for the travelling public.

This last week the ruling Tory administration at the GLC told London Transport (LT) to cut its running costs or lose its monopoly.

Nearly half London's routes including many within central London could be offered to private operators under the provisions of the new Transport Act. The LT Chairman, Sir Peter Masefield, has promised "to retain a flexible attitude" towards private operators.

The dangers of letting in the get-rich-quick merchants were spelt out this week at a meeting of the Campaign to Improve London Transport (CILT).

Non-supervised services, as operated in London between 1900 and 1934, before LT was formed, means a service for the operators' convenience, not the public's, allows them to stop running a service whenever they feel like it - if it is not making enough money

for example, or the vehicle is wanted for another, more profitable, run.

But very few urban bus routes run at a profit anywhere in the world, so fares are bound to rise while the frequency of buses is cut in order that every bus can be guaranteed to be full.

Harvey Sherlock, another speaker, pointed out how the GLC had conveniently ducked the issues raised by the 1960 Buchanan Report, that two-thirds of all buildings would have to be removed in order to provide enough vehicle space for journeying by private car. Instead restriction is imposed through congestion, widely regarded as an Act of God, but actually the result of bad planning.

Bunching of buses, the biggest single complaint against LT bus services, is largely a result of traffic jams caused by the 18 per cent of private car commuters who contribute to 70 per cent of the congestion.

Staffing problems on LT



Organise community protest meetings.

CILT MEETING

The CILT meeting discussed these problems and many more at a well-attended gathering held near Euston station.

Held under the banner of "More-Better-Cheaper Public Transport", the meeting signalled the first burst of activity in the build-up to next year's GLC elections by making public transport a key issue.

What became clear from the outset is that LT is operating an impossible formula. Neil Radcliffe of ASLEF pointed out that the deficit carried forward from last year ensures that operating profits cannot meet overall costs, including interest repayments on loans. Under such a rigid system of financial targets, as set by the GLC, where 80 per cent of the revenue has to be raised by fares, then the only alternatives are fare increases or reduced services. Both make people leave public transport and make it even more unprofitable.

was raised by Terry Allen, a LT TGWU member. Staff shortages - 3,000 drivers and conductors - were the result of the GLC refusing to meet the needs of the public service.

The bus flow through routes in London must be improved, he said, and not through traditional methods but with computerised control. Bus inspectors are incapable of reacting to situations where bunching is caused by road congestion up to several miles away.

Hannah Banner, a speaker on behalf of the Lewisham users association, emphasised the need to organise local transport groups. Amongst recommendations if you are a LT user and would like to see improvements were:

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- * Write to your MP, local councillor, local paper or local radio station.
- * Take a petition to work, to any shops or the bus route, likely to suffer when routes are cut.
- * Talk to fellow passengers about the 1980 Transport Bill and get them to write too.
- * Write to Norman Fowler, Minister of Transport, House of Commons, London SW1.
- * Organise a deputation to the Town Hall.

Ultimately, the only answer to LT's problems is more government support, through a firm and positive discrimination in favour of public transport as recommended by the CILT meeting.



Even longer queues

Hackney—Gazette



BOOBS

The Hackney Gazette appeared again late in September, after not being published for three issues. Another three issues were produced by the editor on his own, with copy supplied by blackleg agencies and local Tories, until the journalists went back to work after the settlement of their dispute.

There was absolutely no mention of the suspension of publication when the paper reappeared. Nor was there any mention of the journalists' dispute. Perhaps the Gazette management did not want to mention how badly they pay their staff - and the fact that the settlement of the dispute means that they have ended up with just £5 more per week.

The dispute was about London weighting allowance - extra pay on top of the nationally agreed for pay for journalists for the expense of living and working in the capital. The journalists wanted £20, but eventually settled for £9.30. However, the Gazette will end up just giving them £5 - since it says its rates were already above the agreed minimum. This means that the rates of pay in the Gazette newsroom vary between £48 and £80 per week. Hardly the princely salary you would expect for working in such a

'glamorous' job as journalism. Understandably, there is a lot of dissatisfaction in the newsroom. The news editor suddenly left, when offered a job abroad, and a senior member of the staff has left the union, the NUJ.

There are also rumours coming out that the 'new technology' recently put into operation in the printworks is not all it might be. The layout and design - never very inspiring before - has certainly gone rapidly downhill since the introduction of photosetting, and has led to some hilarious errors, including one photograph caption that managed to get pasted up over the headline below. Even we at HPP don't do things like that! (Memo to Hackney Gazette editor: there's this bunch of freaks who produce another newspaper in Hackney. If you want a lesson in how to do layout, they're very cheap...)

Even more bizarre have been some recent editorial decisions. "Tory Joe", normally the Gazette pin-up boy, was moved to complain recently that a letter of his that was printed was sent in over a year ago. And some Labour Party people are also finding it very difficult to get coverage for any of their affairs.

ADVERTISEMENT

Join the Party which....

- ☒ STRUGGLES FOR A SOCIALIST BRITAIN
- ☒ FIGHTS RACIALISM IN ALL ITS FORMS
- ☒ CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE TORY CUTS
- ☒ WORKS FOR UNITY OF THE LEFT
- ☒ IS ROOTED IN THE WORKING CLASS
- ☒ ARGUES FOR TRADE UNION RIGHTS
- ☒ CAMPAIGNS FOR WOMENS' LIBERATION
- ☒ IS A MARXIST PARTY OF THE PEOPLE
- ☒ PRODUCES A DAILY PAPER OF THE LEFT
- ☒ FIGHTS FOR REAL DEMOCRACY

.....and much more besides. The Communist Party in Hackney has 350 members, involved in many campaigns, movements and unions. The Communist Party in Britain has 20,000 members active in all the people's movements. We need more members to campaign more effectively, to learn from, to help us strengthen and unite the working class, the left, the community organisations and all who care for democracy, for people's rights, for socialism. The attacks of this Tory government, and the right-wing performance of the last labour government shows that we need a strong Communist Party to win socialism in Britain. Now is the time to join.

Join the Communist Party. Write, phone or send this form to: David Green, Secretary Hackney Communist Party, 126 Amhurst Road, E. 8. tel. 249-6374.

I wish to join/know more about the Communist Party.

Name.....

Address.....

.....(tel. no. if any).....

WHATS ON : NOVEMBER

MUSIC

CROWN & CASTLE

Dalston Junction, E8
(254 3678)

The Meeting Place folk club has Irish folk music every Fri, Sat & Sun evenings. Resident band Cara. Plus surprise guests.

8.30 - 11.00 pm. Free



THE PEGASUS 109 Green Lanes,
N16 (226 5930)

Music every night of the week, including resident jazz/rock bands. Big Chief plays every Sat. night. Alternative Cabaret every other Sunday night. Check with the Pegasus for music on other nights. Admission (unless otherwise stated): £1.

THEATRE

NEW HALF MOON THEATRE

213 Mile End Road, E1.

* **Til 29 Nov:** 'Dreamer' A musical specially commissioned from East End writer Bill Colvill and composer Mel Robinson. 'Dreamer' portrays an East End family celebrating the coming of age of their favourite and youngest son, Terry. The father retires as head of the family and divides his empire between the 3 sons - Terry will have none of it. Against a background of crumbling Britain a violent family drama is enacted with humour and compassion.

Performances: Mon-Sat 8 pm.
Tickets: £3.

THEATRE ROYAL STRATFORD

Gerry Raffles Sq, E15.
Box Office: 534 0310.

* **Till Nov 22:** 'This Jockey Drives Late Nights' Adapted from Tolstoy's 'The Power of Darkness', the play lays bare the emotions and motives behind the kind of sensational domestic tragedies which appear regularly in the popular Sunday papers.

Performances: Mon-Sat 8 pm.
Plus Sunday Night Concerts

* **Sun 23 Nov:** Theatre Royal Cabaret. Music and comedy with special guests. (From 8 pm).

Tickets: between £1 and £3.



CHATS PALACE

42-44 Brooksby's Walk, E9.
(Telephone: 986 6714)

Events during November:

- * **Sat 1st:** Mr. George Bin- & Sun 2nd: more's Celebrated Music Hall. 8 pm.
- * **Sun 2nd:** Lunchtime Jazz with Graham Read's Futuristic Rhythms. 12 noon 50p.
- * **Fri 7th:** Rock Against Racism Benefit. 8 pm £1.50
- * **Sat 8th:** Chats Christmas Show Benefit. 8 pm
- * **Sun 9th:** Lunchtime Jazz with the Geoff Warren Band. 12 noon 50p.
- * **Fri 14th:** Fight Fascism Magazine Benefit. 8 pm £1.20
- * **Sat 15:** Hackney City Farm Barn Dance. 8 pm.
- * **Sun 16:** Lunchtime Jazz. 12 noon 50p.
- * **Fri 21:** Save the Marshes Campaign Benefit. 8 pm £1.20
- * **Sat 22:** Homerton Volunteers Social Night. 8 pm
- * **Sun 23:** Lunchtime Jazz with the 'Amazing Band'. Noon 50p
- * **Fri 28:** Hackney Musicians Collective Benefit. 8 pm £1.20

Thursday Night Jazz Club:

- * **6th:** Mike Osborne Quartet
- * **13th:** Geoff Green
- * **20th:** Elton Dean Quartet
- * **27th:** Harry Becket

During November there are workshops for the Christmas Show every Mon, Tue, and Wed nights to prepare the sets, costumes, music, etc. for this year's panto, 'Robbin the Rich'.

Kids Workshops run from 4-7 pm; with adult from 7-10 pm. Please phone 986 6714 for any other information you need.

CINEMA

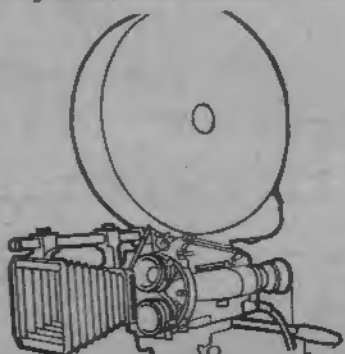
KONAK CINEMA 11 Stoke Newington Rd (254 2415)

- * **From Sun 9th:** 'He Knows You Are Alone'
- * **From Sun 16th:** 'The Island'
- * **From Sun 23rd:** 'The Awakening'

Tickets: £1.60. Check with box office for further details.

RIO CINEMA Stoke Newington High St, N16.

For details of this month's programme, see the Rio ad.



MEETINGS

HACKNEY FIGHTBACK Public meeting on **Mon 3 Nov:** 'What do the Heseltine cuts mean for Hackney?' 7.30pm at the Pitfield St Library, N1.

HACKNEY HEALTH CAMPAIGN

Meets on the second Tuesday of every month at the Shore-ditch Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Rd, E2.

This month (11th) the Health Campaign will be discussing the mass lobby of the Area Health Authority when it meets to decide the future of St. Leonard's Hospital on Thursday 13th November. Everyone interested in saving the local health service is urged to attend.

FRIENDS OF MATTHEW O'HARA

* **Thursday 27 November:** Public meeting: 'Matthew O'Hara: Who Was to Blame for his Death?' The meeting will discuss the issue of medical ill-treatment and secrecy in our prisons. With speakers from PROP (Geoff Coggan), Radical Alternatives to Prison, Friends of Matthew O'Hara. Speakers from the audience are particularly welcome, especially those with experiences of conditions in local prisons, or relatives of prisoners.

8 pm, Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, E8.

WOMEN'S HEALTH IN HACKNEY

The Women's Group of the City & Hackney Community Health Council has organised a series of 6 weekly talks on health for women. The aim of each talk will be to give basic information on problems most women face at some time in their lives.

Each talk will be given by a person with a particular knowledge of the subject, and the meetings will be an opportunity for women to share their experience of health problems and how they cope.

Talks in November:

- * **Mon 3rd:** Alternative Therapies for Illness: Homeopathy, Acupuncture, Osteopathy; with Peter Chappell.
- * **Mon 10th:** Women and Depression; with Naomi Richmond.
- * **Mon 17th:** The problems women bring to their GP; with Julia Lecky.
- * **Mon 24th:** Menopause; with Norma Williams.

Meetings are held at Shore-ditch Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Rd, E2, at 7.30 pm. Further details from the CHC on 739 6308.

HACKNEY WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION (WEA)

* **Wednesday 12 November:** Joint meeting with the Save the Marshes Campaign: 'The Fen in the City', an illustrated history. Speakers: John Nash (Save the Marshes Campaign) on the evolution of the landscape and the history of Fen; Ken Jacobs and Ken

Worpole on the recent social history of the Marshes illustrated with photographic slides and tape recordings of local people's reminiscences.

8 pm at Upton House School, Homerton Row, E5.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST TENDENCY

The Next Step readers' group meets every Thursday at 7.30 at the Trades & Labour Hall, 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Discussions are on racism, Ireland, unemployment and other important issues.

Contact: ELWAR, Box 22, 136 Kingsland High St, E8.

OTHER EVENTS

HACKNEY WOMEN'S AID

* **Sat 29 Nov:** Bazaar. Lots of wonderful bargains.

1.30 pm at the Family Centre, Rectory Road.

HACKNEY CYPRIOT ASSOCIATION

* **Sat 15 November:** Grand Social Dance. With Cypriot music and folk dancing. All welcome - lots of prizes. 7.30-11.30 pm at Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, E8. Tickets: £5, incl. food. For tickets ring 249 4494, or 254 9665.

HACKNEY WOMEN'S AID

HWA now runs a telephone advice line for women, providing help for those who need to find a refuge, or seek advice on housing, custody, injunctions, etc. The advice service is open on: **Thursdays 1-5pm, on 249 8334.**

CHATS PALACE

* **Sat 8 Nov:** Booksale of paperbacks and comics. Send copies of comics, classics and other unwanted gems to Chats (phone 986 6714).

12 noon at Chats Palace, 42-44 Brooksby's Walk, E9.

GALLERY BOOK STORE EXHIBITION

* **4 - 22 Nov:** The Gallery Book Store is holding an exhibition of paintings, photos, sculptures and pottery all by artists living in the area. Come and browse, perhaps buy.

Mon: 11-1 pm; Tue-Sat: 11-6. At the Gallery Book Store, 25 Lower Clapton Rd, E5. Tel: 986 3753.

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

* **Sat 29 November:** The Great Hackney People's Press Benefit Disco! See the people who write your wonderful newspaper enjoying themselves! An event not to be missed.

7.30-11.00 pm at the Trades & Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Bar open till 11 pm. 80p in advance (50p unwaged); £1 on the door (60p unwaged).

ADVERTISEMENT



107, KINGSLAND HIGH ST., E.8.

Tel : 254 6677

NOVEMBER

Weekly programme

Mon 3 for 6 days DRESSED TO KILL
Mon 10 for 6 days THE ELEPHANT MAN
Mon 17 for 6 days THE FOG plus A MAN, A WOMAN AND A BANK
Mon 24 for 6 days BEING THERE

Sunday Matinees

2 Nov RENALDO AND CLARA
9 Nov STEPFORD WIVES plus WATCHMAKER OF ST PAUL
16 Nov ANIMAL CRACKERS plus DUCK SOUP
23 Nov BUS STOP plus LET'S MAKE LOVE
30 Nov MARAT/SADE plus L'ENFANT SAUVAGE

Friday and Saturday lates at 11.15pm.

1 Nov THE HARDER THEY COME plus ROCKERS
7 Nov MIDNIGHT COWBOY plus NEW YORK, NEW YORK
11 Nov IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE plus TARGETS
14 Nov ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN plus THE FRONT
15 Nov ANIMAL CRACKERS plus DUCK SOUP
21 Nov THE FOG plus A MAN, A WOMAN AND A BANK
22 Nov BUS STOP plus LET'S MAKE LOVE
28 Nov DOG DAY AFTERNOON plus NIGHT MOVES
29 Nov LAST TANGO IN PARIS plus STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

For times of weekly programmes and further details please ring cinema.

sun power83 blackstock rd
tel: 01-226 1799**books on**Nuclear Power
Alternative Energy
Ecology, Nature
Organic Gardening
Self-Sufficiency
Crafts, D.I.Y.
Whole Food, Health
Feminism
Anarchism
Fiction
Children's books

open: Mo-Sa 10-6, Thu 12-7

tube: finsbury pk.

NEW PAINT AND PRINT VENTURE

On 2 August I opened Gallery Book Store with various aims in mind. These might be changed and added to as the project improves, such is the nature of a business venture. I aim to provide a service to the community with the sale of books and original art works. The service provides something of a commodity and a luxury. I feel that books are of necessary value to our way of life. We can treat them as tools and they feed us. The value of books is immeasurable. A novel can provide an escape and a balm to pressure. A teach-yourself book or an historical tome can educate beyond belief.

DISBELIEF

I aim to provide a range of mainly paperbacks that can teach and entertain. I also stock a selection of Hackney Workers' Educational Association pamphlets and booklets pertaining to local history and working lives in Hackney. I need advice from people who use my shop and in the last two months have received useful tips for new titles to order. This is exciting. I have met people who negatively express disbelief that a bookshop in Hackney can succeed. In the last two months I have disproved their theory. I am pleased to say that the majority of people I have met agree with me that this part of Hackney needs a decent service station for books.

A second aim I wish to pursue is the patronship of local art and theatre groups. Whatever space is available on my walls and in my windows I will devote to hanging posters for such projects. I will also be willing to

carry leaflets for these events. I hope that people will not forget that my shop is called Gallery Book Store and that Gallery is a very important part of the title. I have the support of two professional artists whose work I shall feature regularly in the gallery.

A E Hance has been a professional artist for 25 years. He is a graduate of the Harrow Art School and for the past 10 years has been teaching art on a part-time basis for ILEA day and evening classes in Kensington. His work has been exhibited in most of the major London shows and has been sold to many private collections in Britain and throughout the world. A E Hance's work is executed mainly in oils and pastels.

Andrew Lumsden works in pencil and watercolour. He was for some years a journalist of the Daily Telegraph and The Times. His work has been sold to collections in California and Australia.

In an effort to promote local artistic ability I aim to arrange at least four local artist exhibitions per year. The first of these is taking place between 4 and 22 November. Amateur artists are certainly not excluded. In the art world, beauty is absolutely in the eye of the beholder.

My name is Roy Smith. For nine years I worked for a unique publishing company which involved itself in seven facets of the arts from paintings and books to film, dance and the theatre. I aim to incorporate all these elements into my Gallery Book Store. Has anyone any suggestions?

Gallery Book Store is at 25 Lower Clapton Road, E5, tel 986 3753. Opens Mon, 11-1; Tues-Sat, 11-6.

East End Books

Over the last 100 years, there have been many books written about life in east London, usually in the form of autobiographies and novels. There also has been a long and local poetry tradition, too. Unfortunately, the majority of such books have long been out of print and have therefore been lost to the present generation. Yet such books form a tradition.

A few people in east London have started to meet to discuss the setting up of a secondhand bookshop and library which will specialise in collecting and making available books written by and about life in east London for the past 100 years or so. The first meeting held in September at Centerprise agreed to go ahead with this project, making the secondhand bookshop the first priority to be followed by the building up of a specialist lending library at a later date.

ions are not dispersed, burned or dumped when they move, emigrate or die. Centerprise has been given two excellent collections of books in the past two years, some of them very valuable and quite rare works on working-class culture and politics.

The next meeting to carry this project forward will be held on Saturday 22 November at 2 pm in Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St., E8. If you cannot make this meeting but are interested in helping or being involved, drop a line to "East London History Bookshop Project", c/o 76 Carysfort Road, London N16.

CORRECTION

Owing to an unfortunate typing error in the October issue of HPP, there was a statistical inaccuracy in the article entitled "The Hope and Despair of CND". "...for all types of missiles the Soviets are outnumbered by about 1 to 13" should have read "by about 1 to 1.3". We promise to purge infiltrators from the Kremlin in the future...

COLLECTIONS

It was also agreed that such a bookshop would serve as much to collect books as well as to sell them, so that local people's collect-

ADVERTISEMENT

GALLERY BOOK STORE

25 Lower Clapton Road, E5.
Tel: 986 3753
Monday 11-1, Tuesday-Saturday 11-6.

4th - 22nd November

Paintings, photos, sculpture and pottery
all by artists living in the area.
Come and browse. Perhaps buy.

Exhibition by local artists

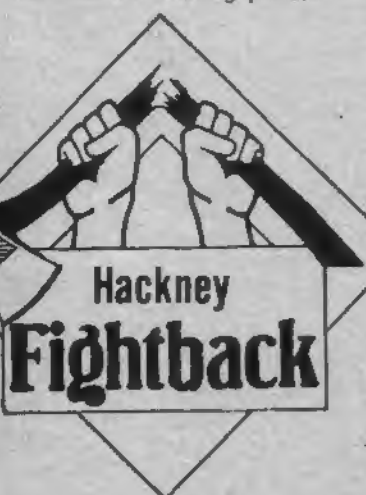
GALLERY BOOK STORE also carries paperbacks, prints, popular novels, cut price and secondhand stock.

HACKNEY FIGHTBACK MONTH OF ACTION

After the latest round of Heseltine's cuts, Hackney is being forced to cut £2m. in order not to be penalised. As a result 450 council jobs will not be filled roads will be swept only every two weeks and public toilets will close after 5 pm. Nearly £1m. will be slashed from Social Services.

Another effect of Heseltine's hatchet job is that not only will no more council houses be built, but repairs to council houses will also be stopped.

To mobilise action against the cuts, Hackney Fightback has organised a month of action. Below is a list of the events taking place.



* Mon 3 Nov: Public meeting: 'What do the Heseltine Cuts mean for Hackney?' Speakers: Dinah Morley (cllr, Haggerston Ward); Public Sector trade unionist; Hackney Health Campaign. Sponsored and chaired by Hackney Trades Council.
7.30 pm at Pitfield Street Library, Pitfield St, N1.

* Thu 13 Nov: Lobby City & East London Area Health Authority, Chart St (near Old St tube), N1, to save St. Leonard's casualty.

* Wed 19 Nov: Lobby of full Council Meeting, Hackney Town Hall, Mre St, E8, to demand that Hackney Council makes a stand against the cuts.

* Thu 27 Nov: East London Demonstration against the cuts. Assemble 5.30 pm, Tower Hill. March to rally at York Hall, 7 pm. Speakers Tony Benn, Ted Knight. Organised by SERTUC.

If you want a free listing in our What's On section, send details of your event to HPP, 85 Dalston Lane, E8. Listings for the December issue should be sent by 20th November.



Sat. 29th Nov
Trades Hall
Dalston Lane
8.00

PARA-NORMAL

Around the beginning of September a number of strange sightings were reported in Abney Park Cemetery; of people in silvery space suits with odd-looking canisters wandering about in the undergrowth.

To those who thought it was a visitation from another world, don't be alarmed; it was, in fact, the council gardeners going about their task of spraying the weeds.

But something sinister did emerge when it was revealed that the gardeners were using Paraquat, an extremely lethal chemical which has been responsible for the deaths of a number of people, who accidentally swallowed it.

Lethal

Visitors to the cemetery, which is a favourite spot for picking blackberries at this time of year, were alarmed when they realised the deadly weedkiller was being sprayed over the plants and bushes. Equally alarmed were members of the Save Abney Park Cemetery Committee (S.A.P.C.C.), who raised the

issue with Hackney Council.

Like many weedkillers, Paraquat is a toxic product, but if accidentally swallowed, its effects are particularly virulent. It causes vomiting, internal bleeding, damage to organs and, if not successfully treated, results in a painful death. If it is splashed on the skin it can cause severe irritation and burns.

The Ministry of Agriculture recommends that livestock be kept away from areas sprayed with Paraquat for at least 14 days. Yet no warnings were issued to the public to keep away from the areas in the cemetery that were sprayed. Perhaps humans are not so important.

In reply to the Save Abney Park Committee's inquiries,

Confused

Hackney Council seemed confused as to whether Paraquat was actually being used. At first they denied it and claimed that the 'space men' were in fact on a training exercise, but later the Borough Engineer, Mr. Coulter, admitted that the weedkiller

was being used. The Deputy Superintendent at Abney Park Cemetery said that it was the first time Paraquat had been used there, and it was being restricted to pathways. He went on to say that, once it was absorbed into the leaves and soil, it became totally harmless.

Ban

Apart from the possible danger to people who may accidentally walk into area being sprayed, the S.A.P.C.C. are worried that the chemical will kill not only weeds but other plants as well. On top of this, Paraquat is a relatively expensive weedkiller. The council, for their part, said they would go on using it, but would issue prior warnings to the public when it was to be deployed. A spokesperson for the S.A.P.C.C. said they want it banned altogether. Hackney is apparently the only London borough still using it.

Perhaps their best hope may lie in calling for the support of the Head of Parks; his name is Fred Fuschia.

Drop 'em A Line

The proposed carve-up of acute services at St. Leonard's Hospital could quite easily break the back of emergency health care in Hackney. Yet the Area Health Authority (AHA) seem all in favour of this happening. How can they get away with it? Simply because the AHA is one of those tiers of bureaucracy that hides itself away and makes its decisions virtually behind closed doors. Their

meetings are supposed to be open to the public, but have you tried to get through the front entrance of their offices in Chart Street?

To make the AHA more open to the views of the public, we have drawn up a list of some of the members, along with their telephone numbers. Why don't you give them a ring and ask them what they are going to do with St. Leonard's?



F.M. CUMBERLEGE is the AHA Chairperson; he is a tea broker for Messrs. Thomas, Cumberlege & Inskip. His work number is 236 6224.

SIR ROBIN BROOK is a director of a number of businesses, including United City Merchants. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge. His home number is 722 5844.

Another old Etonian is VISCOUNT KNUTSFORD (alias Julian Thurston Holland-Hibbert). He has no known employment, but his name sounds impressive. You can contact him on 09273 72002.

STEPHEN MARIUS GRAY is a director of several companies, including Associated Newspapers, which publishes that well known Thatcherite paper the Daily Mail. His work no. (wherever that is!) is 628 4321.

JAMES MICHAEL BLYTH CURRIE is, among other things,

chairman of Blyth, Greene, Jourdain & Co., a firm of merchant bankers. Give him a ring on 623 2050.

A.S. NINIAN is an executive of Thos. Borthwick & Sons, one of the major suppliers of fresh meat to the Health Service. His number is 253 1288.

One of the members appointed from the medical profession is Dr. A.L. HODGSON. His home number is 800 8484.

Of the local council representatives, Hackney's have in the past put up a spirited defence of local services. However, the performances of those councillors from Newham and Tower Hamlets leaves much to be desired. In fact, the Newham members, GARFIELD, WILSON and FITZSIMMONS, regularly turn up to meetings in the borough Rolls Royce, and then talk about the need to cut spending....

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS holds regular meetings on Mondays at 8pm in our office at 85 Dalston Lane, E8. If you would like to find out more about us - or volunteer to help write, produce or sell the next issue - then please come along. Meetings during November will be on 3rd, 10th, and 17th. If you can't come, then please ring 249 0311, evenings and weekends only.

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS is an alternative non-profit making monthly newspaper produced by an open group of people who live or work in Hackney. We publish the paper because we believe that Hackney needs an alternative to the commercial press to serve the real interests of its people. We have no editor and no shareholders and no one is paid by the paper.

HPP is your newspaper: anyone who lives or works in Hackney is welcome to come and help us. All decisions are made collectively.

HPP is sold through various newsagents and shops throughout Hackney. If you think that your newsagent would like to sell it, on sale or return, then please contact us. And if you don't think that you can spare the time to become more fully involved, but you enjoy reading HPP and think more people should read it, then please get in touch if you are willing to sell a few copies to your friends or neighbours or at meetings.

Subscribe!

Take out a subscription to HPP and guarantee regular delivery! Just send a cheque/PO for £2.40 for one year's subscription to Hackney People's Press, 85 Dalston Lane, E8. Please make cheques payable to HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Printed and published by Hackney People's Press, 85 Dalston Lane, London E8. Telephone 249 0311 (evenings and weekends only).

GO POTHOLING!

If you are a cyclist and ride around London, you will know that apart from the expected hazards of cars, heavy lorries and pedestrians, all of which tend to be selectively blind towards cyclists, another major hazard is potholes in the road.

The Cycling Council of Great Britain has produced the cards below, in an attempt to make roads safer for cyclists. They intend to build up a record of

all the potholes which cyclists come across on their journey.

This is where you come in. Make copies of the 2 cards below. When you find a pothole fill out the details on both cards; send one to the Borough Surveyor of whichever borough the pothole is in and another to the Cycling Council of Great Britain, 69 Meadrow, Godalming, Surrey.

CYCLING COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

CYCLISTS TOURING CLUB BRITISH CYCLING FEDERATION ROAD TIME TRIALS COUNCIL
Head Office: 69 Meadrow, Godalming, Surrey

To the County Surveyor

Council

dangerous ROAD SURFACE

On behalf of the Cycling Council I wish to inform you of a dangerous road surface situated

on the _____ bound carriageway

of _____ (MOT No. _____) yds _____

of _____ where a:

Pothole _____
Raised/sunken drain/manhole _____ delete as appropriate
Badly restored trench/excavation _____

or describe _____

constitutes an unnecessary hazard to cyclists.

Please effect a proper repair as soon as possible.

N.B. A copy of this card is being forwarded to the Head Office of the Cycling Council and may be used as evidence to support a claim for compensation should a cyclist subsequently suffer personal injury or damage to his machine before a repair is effected.

Name of informant _____

Address _____

Date _____

CYCLING COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

CYCLISTS TOURING CLUB BRITISH CYCLING FEDERATION ROAD TIME TRIALS COUNCIL
Head Office: 69 Meadrow, Godalming, Surrey

To the County Surveyor

Council

dangerous ROAD SURFACE

On behalf of the Cycling Council I wish to inform you of a dangerous road surface situated

on the _____ bound carriageway

of _____ (MOT No. _____) yds _____

of _____ where a:

Pothole _____
Raised/sunken drain/manhole _____ delete as appropriate
Badly restored trench/excavation _____

or describe _____

constitutes an unnecessary hazard to cyclists.

Please effect a proper repair as soon as possible.

N.B. A copy of this card is being forwarded to the Head Office of the Cycling Council and may be used as evidence to support a claim for compensation should a cyclist subsequently suffer personal injury or damage to his machine before a repair is effected.

Name of informant _____

Address _____

Date _____